

Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1941, General, The Soviet Union, Volume I

740.0011 European War 1939/10365: Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

Helsinki, April 26, 1941—4 p.m.
[Received 10:44 p.m.]

110. Department's telegram No. 64 of April 24 [25] was received and decoded too late to enable me to use it during my conversation this morning with President Ryti. I shall take every opportunity to convey substance thereof to him and others.

I believe both President Ryti and Field Marshal Mannerheim are fairly well aware of the spirit and purpose of our policy but there is little doubt that in lower strata of official life here, both civil and military as well as among intellectual and business leaders in Finland, there is increasing tendency which has lately become more marked, to accept as inevitable German domination of Europe and victory in the war. German efforts here are palpably designed to consolidate this tendency. It is strengthened as previously reported by deep and abiding distrust felt here for the Russians as result of historic experience of Finnish people and by belief that if they must choose between accepting German domination and that of Russia, former is to be preferred since Finns feel that their ethnic unity on their own soil would at least be preserved with hope for the future, whereas in latter event they expect their population would be deported and dispersed.

I venture again to suggest that it would be very useful if transmission to us of important pronouncements by our President and other leaders could be expedited and authorization granted to disseminate them officially. It often happens that news agency reports of such statements are fragmentary and delayed though usually published with varying degrees of prominence.

I should add that sense of your No. 64 has been theme of my remarks to Finnish officials and others in proportion as our policy has clarified. On April 19 I intimated to Minister for Foreign Affairs my hope that nothing would be done here to repeat errors of judgment regarding outcome of war which in summer of 1918 led to such serious embarrassment and difficulties for Finland then and later.⁶⁴

Definitive instructions such as your No. 64 are particularly welcome in our present isolation here.

SCHOENFELD

⁶⁴ 64. Numerous references to Finland's wars and struggle for the establishment of its independence are in Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, vols, i and ii ; *ibid.*, 1919, Russia, index under "Finland"; and Foreign Relations, 1919, vol ii, pp. 210 ff.